The Government of Mongolia, along with UNCRD and other partners, convened The Eleventh Intergovernmental Regional Environmentally Sustainable Transport (EST) Forum in Asia, from 2-5 October 2018 in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, to discuss the role of EST in “Sustainable Urban Design and Development”. The Forum sought to address increasing pressure on transport systems to deliver safe and efficient movement of people and goods in the context of rapid urbanization in Asia. The discussions emphasized how cities can manage significant demand for transport and freight within the constraints of current infrastructure and development. It further addressed the ways in which cities can ensure the continuity of transport operations in the context of disasters. The conference organizers invited the International Recovery Platform (IRP) to the Forum to offer insights on achieving resilient transport systems in the context of disaster risks and climate change. In its presentation, the IRP Secretariat offered national and city governments options to improve resilience of their transport systems, by sharing relevant content from its guidance notes.

The IRP Secretariat recommended maintaining a disaster loss database. Governments typically record the damages to transport infrastructure but not the losses from disasters. However, if governments maintain a disaster loss database, they can facilitate greater understanding of risk and enhance resilience. Disaster loss data give indications about resilience levels, and offer insights regarding: (i) vulnerability of key transport assets to hazards; (ii) resource requirements for reconstruction of transport assets and structures; and (iii) continuity of transport operations in case of disaster. The IRP Secretariat recommended performing pre-disaster mitigation. Governments can strengthen critical transport infrastructure by upgrading or retrofitting these structures to reduce vulnerability. This action requires regular assessment of the conditions of transport systems to address structural deficiencies, exposure, and vulnerability to hazards. Finally, the IRP Secretariat recommended that governments “build back better in recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction”.

Governments can heed the guidance from the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction by ensuring that the reconstruction of transport infrastructure and assets conforms to national and global standards to withstand the impacts of future hazards.

Over 300 officials, from national and local governments, regional and international organizations, UN agencies, development banks, academia, research institutes, NGOs, and the private sector, participated in the Forum. The geographic representation included 25 countries in Northeast, Southeast, and South Asia and the Russian Federation.

Disseminating IRP Knowledge Products at the Third National Conference on Promoting Disaster Risk Reduction 2018

13-14 October 2018, Tokyo, Japan

The Cabinet Office of Japan hosted the Third National Conference on Promoting Disaster Risk Reduction 2018 (“Bosai Kokutai”), 13-14 October in Tokyo, Japan. The purpose of the annual conference is to raise public awareness, to learn and share experiences about disaster risk reduction, and to promote self-help and mutual assistance. This year, the conference focused on the theme of, “Preparing for large-scale disasters: Strengthening a network of collaboration in a community”.

For more information visit our website: http://www.recoveryplatform.org
The Association of the Indonesian Catholic Universities (APTIK), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and the Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta (UAJY), invited the International Recovery Platform to deliver a keynote speech about disaster recovery as an opportunity to enhance resilience and achieve the benefits of building back better.

IRP Delivered Keynote Speech at the 1st APTIK International Conference

21-23 September 2018, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

The speech concluded by emphasizing the importance of preparedness to build back better that can be carried out through pre-agreements, pre-disaster recovery planning, drills, and simulations in order to achieve resilient recovery.

HEM21 Symposium on Pre-Disaster Recovery Planning: Best Practices and Challenges

30 July 2018, Kobe, Japan

The Hyogo Earthquake Memorial 21st Century Research Institute (HEM21) organized a symposium to underscore the importance of pre-disaster recovery planning (PDRP) for communities at risk of earthquakes emanating from the Nankai Trough and other natural hazards, such as the recent floods. IRP Secretariat participated to learn from the discussions.

Prof. Yoshiaki Kawata, the Executive Director of Disaster Reduction and Human Renovation Institute (DRI), delivered the keynote speech emphasizing the importance of promoting resilience, not only for disaster reduction, but also to speed up recovery. The symposium featured two panel discussions. The first panel discussed lessons on recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake and the North Osaka Earthquake, where the panelists highlighted the importance of learning from large-scale and compounding disasters to inform risk reduction efforts. The second panel discussed pre-disaster recovery planning for earthquakes emanating from the Nankai Trough. One of the best practices presented in this panel was the pre-disaster recovery planning experience of Minami Town, located in an earthquake-prone coastal area in Tokushima Prefecture. The residents of the town conducted a community-led PDRP process supported by external experts, who assisted in technical analysis. The community-led PDRP helped to inform mitigation actions and investments that the local government and community were able to enact thereafter. Panelists argued that other local governments and communities can learn from the work of communities like Minami. However, they are often constrained by lack of awareness of recovery planning, disaster risk information, and funding for planning and mitigation.

Approximately 200 people attended the symposium, including government officers and the general public.

IRP focused in particular on the ways in which recovery contributes to “Resilience in Poverty Alleviation and Environmental Mitigation”, the overarching theme of the 1st APTIK International Conference on Poverty and Environment.

Over 100 professors, lecturers, and graduate students from APTIK member universities participated in the conference. Most participants shared research findings and programs on poverty alleviation and environmental mitigation — showcasing the role of universities in providing policy and program recommendations to both the public and private sectors.

In its keynote speech, the IRP Secretariat addressed the benefits of building back better in recovery, including: preventing future losses and reducing vulnerabilities; enabling faster recovery and creating co-benefits to the environment; and minimizing adverse impacts to poor people through inclusion in the recovery process. Secondly, it identified critical actions to build back better, including: having clear and adequate implementation arrangements; ensuring up-to-date policy on recovery; considering context-specific institutional arrangements; and putting in place predictable funds for recovery.

Finally, it offered insights on how to sustain the benefits of building back better, including: regularly amending recovery policies and regulations; regularly conducting pre-disaster mitigation; and regularly conducting drills and simulations.

The Panelists of the HEM21 Symposium

Of the estimated 12,000 participants, approximately 300 visited the IRP booth, which was jointly organized with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR). Visitors to the IRP booth included national and local government officials, university professors, and private sector representatives. The IRP Secretariat shared knowledge products and information about the Platform and its work.